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South Wales Echo letters: Tuesday, September 18, 2018

Your letters to the South Wales Echo

NEWS By walesonline.co.uk

07:05, 18 Sep 2018 | Updated 07:42, 18 Sep 2018

Penarth sea front. Picture sent in by Paul Tarrant, Rumney, Cardiff

Garden sustainably and reject this artificial grass

As more and more of our countryside is converted to pesticide-covered mono crops, our Welsh wildlife is becoming more reliant on our gardens for food and shelter.

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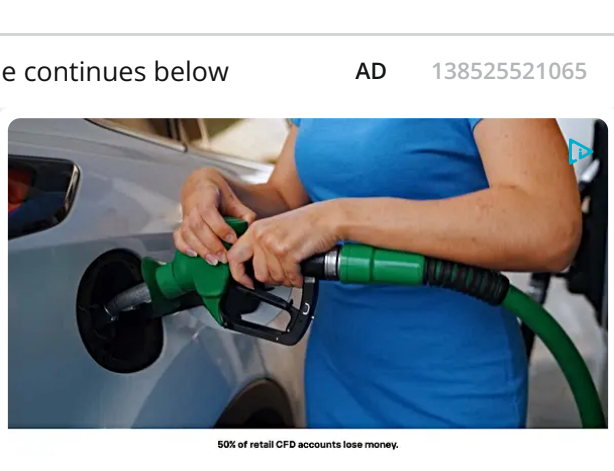

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But there has been a massive increase in people choosing to cover their gardens in artificial or plastic grass and thus turning our gardens into wildlife deserts offering no food.

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Watching a blackbird or song thrush searching for worms and invertebrates on artificial grass must be one of the saddest sights in nature.

Article continues below

No insects can live there and no seeds or flowers are produced and so you remove the food source for birds, hedghogs, shrews, slowworms, frogs, bats, moles, butterflies, bees and many, many more species.

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Add to this the fact that artificial grass does not soak up carbon dioxide and will eventually end up as yet more plastic rubbish taking thousands of years to biodegrade.

The State of Nature report clearly warned us that we need to change the way we run our lives if we are going to reverse the dramatic drop in our wildlife numbers.

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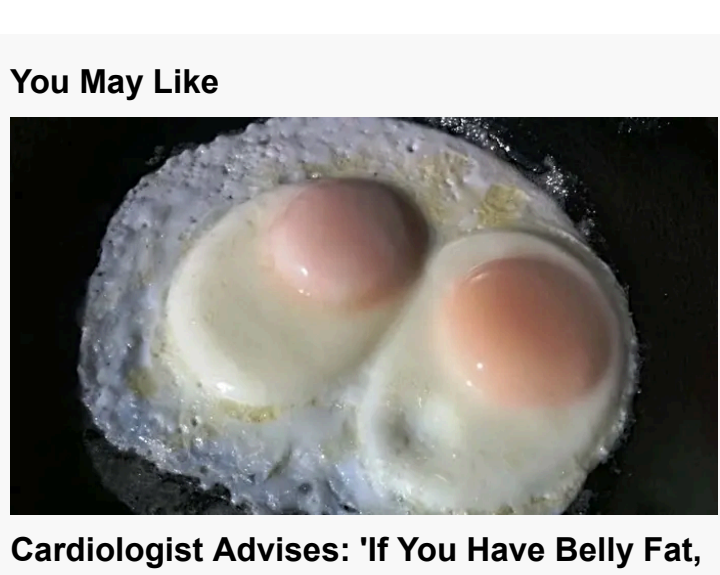

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Barry Action for Nature has launched a online petition on the 38 degrees website calling on the Welsh Government to warn consumers of the damage plastic grass does to our environment and we now need your readers to support us by signing the petition at https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/for-nature-s-sake-keep-off-the-plastic-grass

Be careful of the manufacturers' arguments as currently they are making huge profits and its easy to pay PR experts to promote environmentally-damaging products.

They will argue that with artificial grass you do not need to water or use chemical fertilisers but in Wales you should rarely need to water and there are organic fertilisers which can be used.

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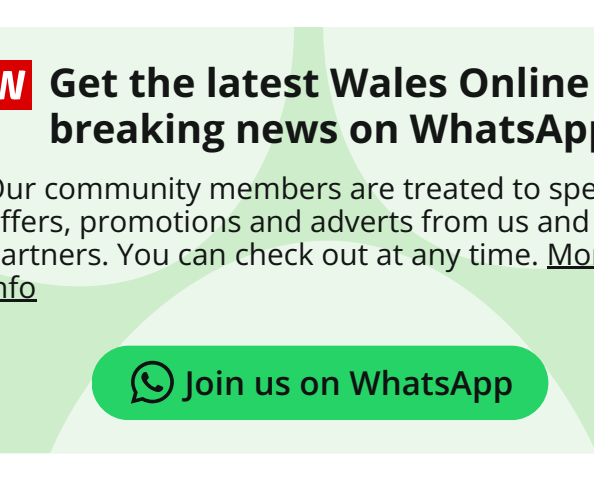

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Finally, please support our petition and I have no doubt that once people are given the full facts about the damage artificial grass does to our Welsh wildlife people will choose to support nature and garden sustainably.

Rob Curtis

Barry Action for Nature, Barry

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I strongly oppose the Brexit result

The veritable Brexitfest that appeared in the recent letters page really can't be let go without comment, particularly the piece on why the UK voted Brexit.

I certainly am not a member of any "liberal elite", just an ordinary valley boy, yet I strongly oppose the result and will continue to do my utmost to stop it. It is the biggest economic mistake since the decision to rejoin the Gold Standard in 1925, and we all know where that ended.

Most evidence suggests that the origin of Brexit, and indeed the rise of Trump, lies in the sub prime mortgage crises in the USA which led directly to the crash, and financial deregulation.

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This saw the near collapse of the international banking system. The EU is rather irrelevant in this blame game.

Since the crash real wages have been stagnant at best, and falling at worse for many people. The response in the UK of course was "austerity" with cuts in public expenditure and massive quantitative easing. This hit the poorest but enriched the asset rich. What has the EU to do with this? Nothing. Austerity was a an entirely UK response.

But look, say the apologists, employment is at an all time high. Therein lies a real problem. Slow growing GDP but increasing employment means one thing, poor productivity and competitiveness. What has the EU to do with this? Nothing.

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Brexit for the likes of JRM, Redwood, Johnson et al was never an end point. It was and is part of a process. A process which would allow deregulation across the board, from employment to environment. A market has to have rules, otherwise it's a race to the bottom. There is a world of difference between freedom and license. Brexit delivers license.

Dr Bob Morgan

Efail Isaf

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Hopefully others will find comfort

Thank you for reporting on Louise Speed's new book about the terrible story and sad demise of her great husband Gary.

Hopefully other people struggling with personal issues will be able to find some level of comfort from her words.

And for the rest of us, it reminds us of what a great man Gary Speed was, a great sportsman who somehow managed to thrive for many years despite struggling with demons for so many years. Rest in peace Gary and all the very best to Louise for the future.

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Gareth Williams

Llandaff

Campaigning for autism services

I made a Citizens' Voice Contribution about autism at this year's National Social Care Conference at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. I mentioned some of my own difficulties as a person living with this condition and said those people with autism should have their needs met within the community.

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It was good to be able to talk about my personal experience with autism and mention a specialised autism support service which is so important to me personally.

I have been involved in a campaign for a Cardiff-based charity, Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru (ASCC), to have enough funds to help them continue with their excellent work.

I need the services they used to offer until, recently, they announced they were having to cut back their services.

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What I found useful was the Monday to Friday drop-in, the supported social groups and the focussed one-to-one support for me as an individual with autism to help meet my needs and reasonable adjustments arranged for me at work.

ASCC want to continue providing these specialised services but they can't do so because of the funding challenges they face.

I recently petitioned the Welsh Government, calling on them to help ASCC with their work, and I had my proposal discussed at the National Assembly for Wales.

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ASCC's services should be viewed by the Government as something which is needed for and well used by people with autism.

According to a document written by Cardiff Council, the local authority does not provide these type of services through statutory provision via, the Integrated Autism Service (IAS).

There needs to be more emphasis on delivering specialised autism services due to the needs we have. There's clear evidence of a need for ASCC's services in the community and I intend to carry on campaigning for these services to be continued.

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